

Examining Dewi Sartika's educational concept: Exploring the meaning behind her struggle and inspiration for contemporary education

Sri Wahyu Widyaningsih^{1,2*}, Dedi Kuswandi¹

¹Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

²Universitas Papua, Indonesia

Abstract: This research examines the concept of education according to Dewi Sartika, the challenges faced, the support received, and the relevance of the education concept by current conditions. The research procedure used is library research. Such investigations contribute to the advancement of science, particularly in educational practice. The research results show that Dewi Sartika is an educational pioneer who is tireless in providing access to education for women. Its holistic educational concept, which involves academic, moral, and practical skills, has helped shape individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also ethical and have relevant skills. In addition, his recognition of the importance of local cultural values in education has contributed to maintaining and respecting Indonesia's cultural heritage. Dewi Sartika's dedication to creating an inclusive and values-centered education system has left an important mark in the history of Indonesian education that is still remembered today.

Keywords: Contemporary education, Dewi Sartika, education for women, holistic education

Mengkaji konsep pendidikan Dewi Sartika: Menelusuri makna di balik perjuangannya dan inspirasi bagi pendidikan kekinian

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengkaji konsep pendidikan menurut Dewi Sartika, tantangan yang dihadapi, dukungan yang diperoleh, dan relevansi konsep pendidikan tersebut sesuai dengan kondisi kekinian. Prosedur penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kepustakaan. Investigasi semacam itu berkontribusi pada kemajuan ilmu pengetahuan, khususnya di bidang praktik pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dewi Sartika merupakan pionir pendidikan yang tak kenal lelah dalam memberikan akses pendidikan bagi perempuan. Konsep pendidikannya yang holistik, yang melibatkan aspek akademis, moral, dan keterampilan praktis, telah membantu membentuk individu yang tidak hanya cerdas secara intelektual, tetapi juga beretika dan memiliki keterampilan yang relevan. Selain itu, pengakuannya akan pentingnya nilai-nilai budaya lokal dalam pendidikan telah memberikan kontribusi besar dalam mempertahankan dan menghormati warisan budaya Indonesia. Dedikasi Dewi Sartika dalam menciptakan sistem pendidikan yang inklusif dan berpusat pada nilai-nilai telah meninggalkan jejak penting dalam sejarah pendidikan Indonesia yang terus dikenang hingga saat ini.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan kekinian, Dewi Sartika, pendidikan bagi perempuan, pendidikan holistik

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*Corresponding author: s.widyaningsih@unipa.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Several heroes in Indonesian history fought for the progress of the nation. One of the female heroes whose contributions are quite large to the progress of the Indonesian nation, especially in fighting for education, is Dewi Sartika. However, articles discussing the story of Dewi Sartika's struggle are still limited to date. Therefore, the younger generation still has a limited understanding of their challenges. Teenagers must get to know the character of Dewi Sartika so they can recognize her amazing qualities (Mustopa & Kadarisman, 2019). Dewi Sartika was born on December 4 1884 in Bandung. Dewi Sartika was born into a Sundanese noble family, Nyi Raden Rajapermas and Raden Somanagara. He has a diligent character, trains hard, has a high work ethic, and does not give up easily (Kurnia & Hidayat, 2020). Dewi Sartika has visionary thinking. She was a pioneer in women's education and was honored by the Indonesian government as a National Hero in 1966. She emphasized that women must have good provisions in carrying out responsibilities at home, such as knitting, cooking, and sewing (Nia et al., 2023). Women are expected to fulfill all responsibilities throughout their lives, including serving their partners, educating their children, carrying out work duties, and much more. We should emulate Dewi Sartika's determination and persistence in education (PS et al., 2022).

Dewi Sartika's thoughts were textually expressed in her book entitled *Kaoetamaan Istri* which was first published by Nix & Co and in collaboration with the Commissie voor de Volkslectuur (Batavia) in 1912. The book was written in Sundanese and then translated into Indonesian by Chye Retty Isnendes and Nugraha Soekari in 2020 (Widuatie et al., 2023). Dewi Sartika saw that women at that time were too dependent on men (Jayudha et al., 2021). Dewi Sartika finally decided to establish a special school for women to improve women's welfare (Maulid, 2022). The school was called *Sakola Istri*, then changed to *Sakola Kautamaan Istri/Women's Priority School* in 1914, and is now known as *Sekolah Dewi Sartika*. In *Sakola Istri*, Dewi Sartika emphasizes the value of education for women (Dahlan & Sulastri, 2013). His publication entitled "*Boekoe Kaoetamaan Istri*" also contains the story of the founding of *Sakola Kautamaan Istri*. This educational institution, founded by Dewi Sartika, continued to develop until she died. *Sakola Istri* is mushrooming in various areas in Pasundan, Indonesia, increasingly. A total of 9 *Sakola Istri* were established in 1912. This spirit was carried over to Bukittinggi, where Encik Rama Saleh founded *Sakola Kautamaan Istri*.

Dewi Sartika founded the *Wife School* to educate women so they could grow into intelligent women. According to Dewi Sartika, women with literacy, writing skills, and broad insight will not only be aware of their social responsibilities as women but will also assert their rights appropriately when interacting with men (Yulliani et al., 2018). The ideas and actions of Dewi Sartika concerning women's education hold significant importance for Indonesia, particularly in the realm of educational empowerment for women. Its emphasis on writing skills, literacy, and a comprehensive perspective for women is intended to foster an understanding of their rights and a sense of social responsibility. As per Dewi Sartika, despite the considerable importance of her contribution, Indonesian society continues to exhibit a lack of comprehension concerning the notion of women and their educational needs.

Based on this explanation, it can be said that Dewi Satika's ideas are beneficial for Indonesia, especially in the field of women's education. However, Indonesian society does

not yet understand the concept of women and education for women, as per Dewi Sartika. Therefore, the meaning of education, formulated by Dewi Sartika, deserves to be studied scientifically for the progress of future generations. This is important to confirm and explain the meaning of education by Dewi Sartika and whether current and future generations need this educational concept. It is crucial to contextualize the application of Dewi Sartika's ideas in the present day in order to preserve their legacy. Regardless of gender, the education imparted can afford equal opportunities to all individuals.

In her writings, Dewi Sartika emphasized the need for men and women to have the same rights. For a nation to progress, women must also progress and have the same level of intelligence as men. Women who become pregnant are the ones who will provide knowledge to their children. Dewi Sartika believes that the foundation of a purposeful existence in this world consists of fair treatment of men and women, especially in acquiring knowledge. Dewi Sartika, with her inclusive vision of providing access to education for all, needs to examine its relevance to current conditions. In the current era, we face complex challenges in the world of education that require adaptation to changing times, technology, and global needs (Afriani et al., 2022). In facing the dynamics of the times, the values of concern for character, integrity, and understanding of local values, which are adhered to by Dewi Sartika, seem to be becoming increasingly important. Looking back at the principles championed by Dewi Sartika, we can evaluate and adapt the current education system to remain relevant and equip future generations with strong skills, character, and cultural understanding.

According to Dewi Sartika, education is a science or instrument that facilitates the organization, transformation, and progress of everything, including students. The valuable insights presented in this article are fundamental components in understanding Dewi Sartika's ideas about education and produce suggestions for further scientific investigation, which include educational concepts related to Dewi Sartika and the educational concepts of other figures. This article will explore Dewi Sartika's role and major contribution to advancing the Indonesian education system, as well as the values she champions for inclusion, character, and respect for local values in the world of education. This research examines the concept of education according to Dewi Sartika, the challenges faced; the support received, and the relevance of the education concept by current conditions.

METHOD

This research refers to the library research method. This exclusive approach relies on written sources such as books, encyclopedias, scientific journals, dictionaries, and magazine publications as the basis for investigations. This method is guided by classic steps in research, starting from formulating basic questions about the problem to be studied, exploring the theoretical basis, data analysis, and discussion, to concluding (Connaway & Radford, 2021). The data analysis technique used in this library research is the content analysis method. The initial research steps include identifying relevant problems and defining a strong theoretical basis. From there, a process of searching and identifying relevant information from various sources is carried out, which is then carefully collected, recorded, and analyzed to support the formulation of strong and in-depth conclusions. This library research method emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding of the values put forward by Dewi Sartika in the educational context, as well as how these values can be

applied and relevant in today's dynamic educational conditions. The aim is to gather information and present detailed knowledge, build in-depth understanding, and provide valuable thought contributions in the current educational realm.

RESULTS

Identify the concept of education for women

Dewi Sartika believes that education is the best means to organize, improve, and advance all aspects of life (Ibrahim, 2018). According to him, women's education is very important. Women are the main pillars of national development because they educate their children and grandchildren to become good human beings. What Dewi Sartika did in her time was a feminist movement because she was able to break taboos that were not common in her time. Dewi Sartika's views on women's education inspired many people who later helped establish the Kautamaan Istri School in Bandung. Dewi Sartika is a thinker, activist, and feminist who is a visionary for her country's progress, as proven by her ideas (Sulistiani & Lutfatulatifah, 2020).

The emphasis of the Wife School's learning is on feminine skills, by the name and mission of the school, namely educating women to be the main wives (Wiriaatmadja, 2009). The emphasis was on teaching women skills such as sewing, mending, embroidery, crocheting, cooking, serving food, caring for babies, and religious studies. The concept of education, according to Dewi Sartika, is as follows (Wiriaatmadja, 2009):

- 1) Learn how to look after the house, namely sweeping and washing floors, arranging furniture, dusting, washing dishes and pans, tidying clothes, and cooking, all considered household chores.
- 2) Study the customs and needs of children. If the child comes from an upper class, then he must learn Menak customs, which require him to pay attention to three levels of etiquette, namely when meeting people of a higher, equal, and lower level. If the child comes from a lower social class, Somah, he will only learn Somah customs.
- 3) Learn how to cook. Women must be able to cook in the kitchen and serve food well.
- 4) Learn how to care for sick people, including preparing and giving medicine and providing special food for sick people. These women take care if a family member, such as a parent or sibling, is sick.
- 5) Religious studies are not only limited to reading the Koran and reciting the Koran, but as children get older, they also have to learn to pray and fast in the month of Fasting.

Dewi Sartika, one of Indonesia's educational figures, has several important educational concepts. Education for women is one of the most basic concepts in Dewi Sartika's philosophy. She believes education is the key to improving women's social and economic status and supports equal educational rights for women (Faujiah & Samsudin, 2020). Dewi Sartika views education as a means of emancipation from social and economic constraints. She believes women can become more independent and contribute actively to society with a solid education.

Holistic education, according to Dewi Sartika

Dewi Sartika's educational concept combines holistic elements, such as academic education, moral teaching, and practical skills. He wishes to provide education that prepares

superior students to have strong character and practical skills. Dewi Sartika realizes the importance of education based on local culture and values. Dewi Sartika's educational concept is based on the mottos *cageur* (healthy), *baguer* (good personality), *pinter* (intelligent), *wanter* (independent), and *bener* (living on the right path) (Aeni & Habib Fachrurozi, 2022). He hopes the education system will continue respecting and respecting Indonesia's cultural heritage and traditions. Holistic education is an educational approach that focuses on the development of the whole individual, including physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual aspects (Vargas-Hernández & Vargas-González, 2022). Several principles adhered to by Dewi Sartika and in line with a holistic education approach include:

- 1) Overall individual development, namely paying attention to students' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual development.
- 2) Women's empowerment, namely opening up educational opportunities for women and encouraging their role in community development.
- 3) A values-based approach, namely integrating moral and ethical values in the educational process to form good character.
- 4) Education for life, namely preparing students not only academically but also for everyday life through social skills, life skills, and emotional intelligence.

Dewi Sartika indirectly mentioned the concept of holistic education. However, the efforts and principles she applied in establishing schools for women show her enthusiasm for providing comprehensive education beyond just academic learning. Initiated by Dewi Sartika, the school is a place where women can develop themselves to their fullest potential, in addition to being a place where they can conquer specific subjects. The primary objective is to impart women with the knowledge, abilities, and values necessary to make substantial contributions to society. By establishing this educational institution, Dewi Sartika is not solely advocating for the provision of formal education, but also fostering an atmosphere that promotes the personal and intellectual growth of women, equipping them with the capacity to navigate diverse life circumstances with greater autonomy.

Inclusive education initiated by Dewi Sartika

Dewi Sartika also strives to realize the concept of inclusive education: all communities, including underprivileged communities, have equal access to education. This reflects its commitment to equality and social justice. Dewi Sartika views educators as social leaders. He believes that educators must provide examples of positive social change through education. Dewi Sartika encourages women to receive education in the name of gender equality. Gender equality in education is an important issue, with ongoing efforts to ensure women have equal learning and development opportunities (Balliet & Heffernan, 2023). Dewi Sartika also emphasized the importance of education that does not only focus on academics but also on developing character and moral principles. This concept is still relevant because moral and character education is crucial to developing responsible and positive societal contributors.

Dewi Sartika also prioritizes independence in education, both financially and administratively. This concept can be applied by creating educational programs that allow educational institutions to make decisions and manage resources with greater autonomy.

Dewi Sartika also emphasized the importance of education related to local wisdom and culture. Education that considers a region's needs and socio-cultural realities remains relevant for producing graduates who can contribute to the growth of local communities. Dewi Sartika's educational concept is still relevant today because her principles emphasize the importance of equal access to education, gender equality, morality, independence, and local relevance in education.

DISCUSSION

Challenges faced by Dewi Sartika in fighting for education

Dewi Sartika was an Indonesian woman who founded "Sakola Kautamaan Istri" in the early 20th century to advance women's education and the struggle for women's rights. Raden Dewi Sartika encountered several challenges. The challenge faced by Dewi Sartika is that Dewi Sartika's education was stopped because her father was exiled to Ternate after being accused of attempting to murder the new Regent of Bandung. Dewi Sartika was placed in the care of her uncle. There, Dewi Sartika was seen as different; her position as an outcast made her ostracized and disliked by her relatives (Faujiah & Samsudin, 2020). The next challenge faced by Dewi Sartika is limited access to education. At that time, women's access to education was very limited. The majority of women do not have formal educational opportunities. Dewi Sartika worked hard to obtain an adequate formal education. At that time, Indonesian society's social and cultural norms required women to carry out their roles as housewives and caring for the family. Sartika tries to fight this perspective and advocates for women's rights to get an education and work just like men. Another challenge is that Dewi Sartika lives in a restrictive feudal environment; activities that take up young women's time do not broaden their horizons. All women's interests and aspirations are centered on marriage.

Dewi Sartika strives to advance women from all levels of society. Dewi Sartika also tried to continue fighting for education for women even though, during her lifetime, Indonesia was still colonized by the Dutch. Dewi Sartika founded the "Kartini School" or "Wife School" in 1904 despite administrative obstacles (Septian, 2022). Establishing the school was full of complicated bureaucratic and administrative obstacles. He remained steadfast in establishing the school, including several other special women's institutions, which became important symbols of the Indonesian women's liberation movement (Syakur et al., 2024). Despite various obstacles, Dewi Sartika remains committed to advancing women's education in Indonesia. Dewi Sartika is considered a pioneer in the struggle for women's rights and education in Indonesia, and her legacy and efforts are still admired today. Dewi Sartika's views on women's education influenced many people, some of whom later contributed to the formation of Sakola Istri. The idea of education promoted by Dewi Sartika, which states that women must have ready-to-use skills, is very relevant today. From Dewi Sartika's thoughts, it is clear that she is an activist with a vision for developing her country, especially women.

Dewi Sartika is one of Indonesia's icons who struggles to elevate the dignity and worth of women. Women are placed on an equal footing with men through education. However, this does not mean that women can ignore their obligation to show respect for men; rather, it means that they are no longer taken for granted by men. every individual, especially men. In spite of this equality, women continue to have an obligation to treat males with respect.

However, this notion of equality does away with the notion that specific duties or obligations are exclusive to one gender. Irrespective of gender, it is expected that all individuals, including males, demonstrate mutual appreciation and respect.

Support of Dewi Sartika's struggle

Raden Kanduruan Agah Suriawinat, Dewi Sartika's husband, is a teacher in Karang Pamulang. This marriage did not hinder Dewi Sartika's dreams and career. Her husband provided full understanding and support. They are a caring couple who support each other in all their endeavors. The school founded by Dewi Sartika became more progressive and of better quality with the help of her husband (Faujiah & Samsudin, 2020). Cora Vreede-de Stuers said he did not stop working when Dewi Sartika married R.A. Soeriawinata in 1906. Instead, before his death, several years later, her husband worked with his partner to build nine schools for girls under her direction in 1912. An impressive feat that included fifty percent of all girls' schools in the Sunda region at that time (Wiriaatmadja, 2009).

Raden Adipati Aria Sutamihardja is the husband of Dewi Sartika. Raden Adipati Aria Sutamihardja was a progressive thinker of his time who supported Dewi Sartika's vision to advance women's education (Amar, 2017). Sutamihardja's support for Dewi Sartika is reflected in his support for the Kartini School and Dewi Sartika's efforts to advance women's education. (Maulid, 2022). Dewi Sartika's endeavor to promote women's education has undeniably been bolstered by collaboration and support from various stakeholders, including her spouse, Sutamihardja. This demonstrates the significance of familial collaboration in advancing a collective aspiration for constructive societal transformation.

Sutamihardja was a Javanese nobleman of his time who had a more progressive view of education and the position of women in society. Sutamihardja supported Dewi Sartika's efforts in providing education to women and advancing women's emancipation in Indonesia, even though, at that time, social and cultural conditions required women to carry out the traditional role of homemakers. Dewi Sartika was able to continue her struggle to establish the Kartini School and spread her ideas about women's education with the help of her husband, Sutamihardja, and several family members, especially her younger siblings (Ibrahim, 2018). Dewi Sartika's efforts to advance women's rights and women's education in Indonesia in the early 20th century were facilitated by this support despite her many challenges.

The relevance of the concepts of women's education, holistic education, and inclusive education, according to Dewi Sartika, given current conditions.

The education concept by Dewi Sartika, which emphasizes that women must be equipped with life skills, is very in tune with today's times. Gender equality in education, also one of Dewi Sartika's educational concepts, is still relevant today. Several real examples of Dewi Sartika's struggle are still relevant to the current situation. The establishment of the Kartini School by Dewi Sartika in 1904 is one of the most obvious examples. This institution was founded to provide education to Indonesian women, and its founder's belief that women's education should be of equal quality to men's is still relevant today. In many countries, including Indonesia, there are ongoing efforts to improve access and quality of education for women.

The concept of women's empowerment emphasized by Dewi Sartika is also very relevant. Various initiatives and programs have been launched to empower women economically, politically, and socially. Women's empowerment remains important to eliminate gender inequality. Dewi Sartika encourages women's participation in decision-making, especially in education (Sulistiani & Lutfatulatifah, 2020). Ongoing efforts are to expand women's participation in politics, leadership, and public policy. Many countries strive for gender equality in various institutions and decision-making bodies. Dewi Sartika's struggle for equal social and political rights for women is still relevant. The struggle for women's rights, including the right to vote, legal protection, and equality, continues in many countries. Dewi Sartika's respect for local culture and traditional values remains crucial. Maintaining and respecting local culture and cultural identity remains important for cultural diversity and national identity.

Dewi Sartika is an educator who has a broad vision for education. He views education as mere academic knowledge and a foundation for forming character and practical skills useful in everyday life. This relates to holistic education, which is still relevant to current conditions. Apart from academic knowledge and morality, Dewi Sartika also pays attention to providing practical skills to students. He believes that education must be relevant to the needs of everyday life. Therefore, besides academic learning, he encourages practical skills to help students succeed in real life after school. This approach shows that Dewi Sartika focuses on providing academic knowledge and building character and practical skills to help students succeed in their future lives. This holistic approach aligns with the view that education should prepare students for academic success and face life's challenges with strong character and relevant skills. Dewi Sartika also believes that a good child is physically, spiritually, intellectually, and morally healthy and has the skills to prepare for life. For him, education is knowledge or a tool to organize, transform, and advance everything, including students, in a better direction. According to him, the greatest educational method is the teacher's example, so teachers play an important role in the educational process.

Dewi Sartika's views regarding education as an instrument for regional and state development are also relevant to current conditions. High-quality, community-focused education remains important in addressing regional disparities and driving inclusive economic growth. This concrete example shows that Dewi Sartika's efforts to advance women's rights and education continue to have a positive impact today (Sulistiani & Lutfatulatifah, 2020). Her significant contribution to advancing women's rights and quality education continues to inspire many people. It is an integral part of efforts to create a more just and equal society, especially regarding inclusive education for all students. Education is expected to provide obligations and rights to obtain knowledge without discrimination and exception (Susilowati et al., 2022). Dewi Sartika's enthusiasm for providing access to education for previously neglected groups can be interpreted as an early form of the spirit of inclusion in education. Dewi Sartika does not explicitly discuss the concept of inclusive education as it is understood in the modern era. However, her enthusiasm for providing access to education to all individuals, regardless of background or gender, is in line with the principles of inclusion in education.

CONCLUSION

Dewi Sartika is one of the Indonesian education figures who has driven the progress of women's education. He emphasized the importance of education for women. Women are the main pillar in building the nation's next generation because it is through education that children can become good human beings. A good child is a child who has the necessary abilities to face life's challenges and is physically, spiritually, mentally, and mentally healthy. Dewi Sartika harmonizes various aspects of holistic education, namely academic, moral, and practical skills, to create superior students, have a strong spirit, and consider Indonesian values and culture in the education system. It is also important to provide access to education to all individuals, regardless of background or gender. This is in line with the principles of inclusion in education.

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